

*Statement Before*

The Public Health Committee

Monday, March 1, 2010

*Re: HB 5290: An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines By Licensed Pharmacists*

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Good afternoon Rep. Ritter, Sen. Harris and members of the committee. My name is Marghie Giuliano. I am a pharmacist and the Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association. The Connecticut Pharmacists Association is a professional organization representing 1000 pharmacists in the state of Connecticut. I am here today to speak in strong support of HB 5290: An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines by Licensed Pharmacists

HB 5290 would allow pharmacists to administer all vaccines to persons over 18 years of age. A recent article in the Hartford Courant stated that most adults are not getting the necessary vaccinations and that as of 2008, one-third of people 65 and older had not received the pneumococcal vaccine. The article also acknowledged that if vaccines became a routine part of medical care and consumers were educated around their effectiveness and safety, increases in administration could avoid 40,000 to 50,000 deaths from vaccine-preventable illnesses each year. In addition, approximately \$10 billion dollars in healthcare costs each year would also be avoided. A pharmacist could play a significant and important role in this process. They are able to provide education on the benefits of vaccines, identify patients who are at high risk, as well as administer the needed vaccine. The benefits of greater access to vaccine information and increased awareness are significant for both the consumer and for the health care system!

The importance of this legislation is that it removes the barrier for adults to have to find another provider to administer other needed vaccines. To this point, this past year we have seen the effects of increased access to the flu vaccine because pharmacists have been allowed to administer them. By creating another avenue through which adults can get all their vaccines we should be able to improve the statistics on adult vaccine utilization. With the threat of a pandemic this year, pharmacists were able to help substantially by vaccinating a large number of people, thereby freeing up physicians time to focus on the more important role of treating the sick.

Another factor in the administration of vaccines is the role of the pharmacy. It can and should also be a site for patient screening, education of the public, dispensing of antiviral and other medications and for the administration of vaccinations.

With the recent additions of NY and Maine, pharmacists are now allowed to administer vaccinations in all 50 states. In eighteen states to date, pharmacists are authorized to administer all vaccinations without age restriction. Pharmacists in these states are trained and practicing the administration of immunizations to all age groups, and the public is aware and accepting of their role. The advantage that these states have is if there is a public health crisis, pharmacists are ready to assist and not in the midst of acquiring a new skill. Pharmacists in these states are able to vaccinate entire families rather than only a portion of the family. This was illustrated with the HINI outbreak as one of the high risk groups was children. The training is exactly the same for children and adults and in the interest of emergency preparedness and bolstering our public health infrastructure, ensuring that pharmacists are trained and practiced immunizers of all age groups is sound public health policy.

To this point, I would ask for a change in Section I(c) to say "For the purposes of this section, "adult" means an individual who has attained the age of twelve years". I urge you to consider this.